


CLEAN VERSION OF EACH REPLACEMENT SECTION/CLAIM

In the Claims

Kindly amend Claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 41, 44, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 62, 63, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 76, and 77 as follows.

1(Amended). A bonded composite, comprising:

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- (a) a first flexible sheet material having first and second opposing major surfaces, the first and second major surfaces defining a first overall area of said first flexible sheet material, and a first web interior between the first and second major surfaces, said first flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article;
 - (b) a second flexible sheet material having third and fourth opposing major surfaces, the third and fourth major surfaces defining a second overall area of said second flexible sheet material, and a second web interior between the third and fourth major surfaces, said second flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article; and
 - (c) a multiplicity of bond elements defining bonds bonding said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other in a bond pattern,

the bond pattern having a pattern length, and first and second side edges, the pattern length and the side edges, in combination, defining a third area of the bond pattern, the third area of the bond pattern being smaller than at least one of the first and second areas of the respective first and second flexible sheet materials such that a portion of at least one of the first and second areas of respective said first and second flexible sheet materials is outside the bond pattern, the bond pattern having a bond

pattern interior between the first and second side edges, and a pattern width between the first and second side edges, and a central longitudinal axis,

the bond pattern reflecting application of force, during formation of the bond pattern, urging the first and second flexible sheet materials toward each other in face-to-face relationship to form an array of separate, distinct, and spaced elongate bond elements in a repeating arrangement affixing said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other,

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- (d) as ones of said bond elements, a first sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate and distinct stress receptor elements disposed proximate the side edges of the bond pattern, and spaced at first distances from each other along the length of the bond pattern, the side edges of the bond pattern being defined generally between outwardly-disposed sides of sequentially-adjacent ones of said stress receptor elements, and
 - (e) as ones of said bond elements, a second sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate and distinct transfer and dissipation elements disposed inwardly of the side edges and inwardly of the stress receptor elements, and at second distances from the stress receptor elements less than the spacing of respective ones of the stress receptor elements from each other.

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3(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 1 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of thermal energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

4(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 1 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of ultrasonic-frequency energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

5(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, and polyamides, and copolymers, mixtures, and blends of said polymeric materials.

6(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises a fibrous web having a multiplicity of randomly-spaced small openings extending from one of the respective major surfaces into the interior of the respective web.

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7(Amended). A bonded composite, comprising:

- (a) a first flexible sheet material having first and second opposing major surfaces, the first and second major surfaces defining a first overall area of said first flexible sheet material, and a first web interior between the first and second major surfaces, said first flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article;
- (b) a second flexible sheet material having third and fourth opposing major surfaces, the third and fourth major surfaces defining a second overall area of said second flexible sheet material, and a second web interior between the third and fourth major surfaces, said second flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article, and being bonded to the first flexible sheet material by bond elements defining an elongate bond pattern, the elongate bond pattern having regularly repeating bond segments along a length thereof, the bond elements in each bond segment being spaced from each other according to a pattern of bond elements common to the respective bond segments,

the bond pattern having a pattern length, and first and second side edges, the pattern length and the side edges, in combination, defining a third area of the bond pattern, the third area of the bond pattern being smaller than at least one of the first and second areas of the respective first and second flexible sheet materials such that a portion of at least one of the first and second areas of respective said first and second flexible sheet materials is outside the bond pattern, the bond pattern having a bond pattern interior between the first and second side edges, and a pattern width between the first and second side edges, and a central longitudinal axis,

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the bond pattern reflecting application of force, during formation of the bond pattern, urging the first and second flexible sheet materials toward each other in face-to-face relationship to form, as the repeating bond segments, an array of separate, distinct, and spaced elongate bond elements in a repeating arrangement affixing said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other, ones of said transfer and dissipation elements extending across the width of said bond pattern, from loci proximate the side edges, at angles of between about 10 degrees and about 65 degrees with respect to the longitudinal axis,

a bond width being defined by a distance between the first and second side edges perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, including spaces between bond elements, at any point along the length of the pattern, such bond width extending along the pattern width, bond element contact lengths (84) being correspondingly defined along the bond width, the composite of the bond element contact lengths (84) along a respective bond width defining a composite contact length for the respective bond width, the composite contact length, taken at equally spaced intervals along the length of the bond pattern, defining an average composite contact length, the composite contact length at a given point along the length of the pattern varying from the average composite contact length by no more than about 13 percent.

14(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 7 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of thermal energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

15(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 7 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of ultrasonic-frequency energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

A3 16(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 7 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, and polyamides, and copolymers, mixtures, and blends of said polymeric materials.

17(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 7 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises a fibrous web having a multiplicity of randomly-spaced small openings extending from one of the respective major surfaces into the interior of the respective web.

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20(Amended). A bonded composite, comprising:

- (a) a first flexible sheet material having first and second opposing major surfaces, the first and second major surfaces defining a first overall area of said first flexible sheet material, and a first web interior between the first and second major surfaces, said first flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article;
- (b) a second flexible sheet material having third and fourth opposing major surfaces, the third and fourth major surfaces defining a second overall area of said second flexible sheet material, and a second web interior between the third and fourth major surfaces, said second flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article; and
- (c) a multiplicity of bond elements defining bonds bonding said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other in a bond pattern,

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the bond pattern having a pattern length, and first and second side edges, the pattern length and the side edges, in combination, defining a third area of the bond pattern, the third area of the bond pattern being smaller than at least one of the first and second areas of the respective first and second flexible sheet materials such that a portion of at least one of the first and second areas of respective said first and second flexible sheet materials are outside the bond pattern, the bond pattern having a bond pattern interior between the first and second side edges, and a pattern width between the first and second side edges, and a central longitudinal axis,

the bond pattern reflecting application of force, during formation of the bond pattern, urging the first and second flexible sheet materials toward each other in face-to-face relationship to form an array of separate, distinct, and spaced elongate bond elements in a repeating arrangement affixing said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other,

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- (d) as ones of said bond elements, a first sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate and distinct stress receptor elements disposed along the length, and proximate the side edges of, the bond pattern, the side edges of the bond pattern being defined generally between outwardly-disposed sides of sequentially-adjacent ones of said stress receptor elements, and
- (e) as ones of said bond elements, a second sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate, distinct, and spaced transfer and dissipation elements disposed along the length of the bond pattern, inwardly of the side edges of the bond pattern and generally inwardly of the stress receptor elements, respective said transfer and dissipation elements having spaced first and second ends, and legs extending from the respective first and second ends toward each other and outwardly of the longitudinal axis along the length of the bond pattern to outwardly-disposed portions of said legs, joined to each other, between said stress receptor elements, the stress transfer and dissipation elements directing stresses inwardly into the interior of the bond pattern.

24(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 20 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of thermal energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

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25(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 20 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of ultrasonic-frequency energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

26(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 20 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises polymeric material selected

from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, and polyamides, and copolymers, mixtures, and blends of said polymeric materials.

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27(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 20 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises a fibrous web having a multiplicity of randomly-spaced small openings extending from one of the respective major surfaces into the interior of the respective web.

30(Amended). A bonded composite, comprising:

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- (a) a first flexible sheet material having first and second opposing major surfaces, the first and second major surfaces defining a first overall area of said first flexible sheet material, and a first web interior between the first and second major surfaces, said first flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article;
 - (b) a second flexible sheet material having third and fourth opposing major surfaces, the third and fourth major surfaces defining a second overall area of said second flexible sheet material, and a second web interior between the third and fourth major surfaces, said second flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article; and
 - (c) a multiplicity of bond elements defining bonds bonding said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other in a bond pattern,

the bond pattern having a pattern length, and first and second side edges, the pattern length and the side edges, in combination, defining a third area of the bond pattern, the third area of the bond pattern being smaller than at least one of the first and second areas of the respective first and second flexible sheet materials such that a portion of at least one of the first and second areas of respective said first and second

flexible sheet materials is outside the bond pattern, the bond pattern having a bond pattern interior between the first and second side edges, and a pattern width between the first and second side edges, and a central longitudinal axis,

the bond pattern reflecting application of force, during formation of the bond pattern, urging the first and second flexible sheet materials toward each other in face-to-face relationship to form an array of separate, distinct, and spaced elongate bond elements in a repeating arrangement affixing said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other,

- (d) as ones of said bond elements, a first sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate and distinct stress receptor elements disposed along the length, and proximate the side edges of, the bond pattern, the side edges of the bond pattern being defined generally between outwardly-disposed sides of sequentially-adjacent ones of said stress receptor elements, and

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(e) as ones of said bond elements, a second sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate, distinct, and spaced transfer and dissipation elements spaced along the length of the bond pattern, inwardly of the side edges of the bond pattern and generally inwardly of the stress receptor elements, respective said transfer and dissipation elements having first ends disposed on the interior of the bond pattern, said respective transfer and dissipation elements extending to second ends adjacent the side edges of the bond pattern between respective ones of said stress receptor elements, the stress transfer and dissipation elements directing stresses inwardly into the interior of the bond pattern, and dissipating such stresses on the interior of the bond pattern.

31(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 30 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of thermal energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

32(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 30 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of ultrasonic-frequency energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

33(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 30 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, and polyamides, and copolymers, mixtures, and blends of said polymeric materials.

34(Amended). A bonded composite as in Claim 30 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises a fibrous web having a multiplicity of randomly-spaced small openings extending from one of the respective major surfaces into the interior of the respective web.

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35(Amended). A bonded composite, comprising:

- (a) a first flexible sheet material having first and second opposing major surfaces, the first and second major surfaces defining a first overall area of said first flexible sheet material, and a first web interior between the first and second major surfaces, said first flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article;
- (b) a second flexible sheet material having third and fourth opposing major surfaces, the third and fourth major surfaces defining a second overall area of said second flexible sheet material, and a second web interior between the third and fourth major surfaces, said second flexible sheet material being suitable for use in a personal care absorbent article, and being bonded to the first flexible sheet material by bond elements

defining an elongate bond pattern, the elongate bond pattern having regularly repeating bond segments along a length thereof, the bond elements in each bond segment being spaced from each other according to a pattern of bond elements common to the respective bond segments,

the bond pattern having a pattern length, and first and second side edges, the pattern length and the side edges, in combination, defining a third area of the bond pattern, the third area of the bond pattern being smaller than at least one of the first and second areas of the respective first and second flexible sheet materials such that a portion of at least one of the first and second areas of respective said first and second flexible sheet materials is outside the bond pattern, the bond pattern having a bond pattern interior between the first and second side edges, and a pattern width between the first and second side edges, and a central longitudinal axis,

the bond pattern reflecting application of force, during formation of the bond pattern, urging the first and second flexible sheet materials toward each other in face-to-face relationship to form, as the repeating bond segments, an array of separate and distinct elongate bond elements in a repeating arrangement affixing said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other,

a bond width being defined by the width of the pattern perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, including spaces between bond elements, at any point along the length of the pattern, such bond width extending along the pattern width, bond element contact lengths (84) being correspondingly defined along the bond width, the composite of the bond element contact lengths (84) along a respective bond width defining a composite contact length for the respective bond width, the composite contact length, taken at equally spaced intervals along the length of the bond pattern, defining an average composite contact length,

a steady power distribution across the width of the bond pattern, as the bond pattern is being formed, defining minimum variations in composite contact lengths as compared to the average composite contact length for the bond pattern for at least a

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complete circumferential rotation of a rotary anvil reflecting the bond pattern, wherein variations in composite contact lengths of the bond pattern reflect no more than about 13 percent of the average composite contact length of the bond pattern throughout the complete circumferential anvil rotation.

41(Amended). An absorbent article having a front portion and a rear portion, and a crotch portion extending between said front portion and said rear portion, said absorbent article comprising:

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- (a) a first flexible sheet material having first and second opposing major surfaces, the first and second major surfaces defining a first overall area of said first flexible sheet material, and a first web interior between the first and second major surfaces;
 - (b) a second flexible sheet material having third and fourth opposing major surfaces, the third and fourth major surfaces defining a second overall area of said second flexible sheet material, and a second web interior between the third and fourth major surfaces; and
 - (c) a multiplicity of bond elements defining bonds bonding said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other in a bond pattern, and
 - (d) an absorbent core disposed adjacent at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials,

the bond pattern having a pattern length including a central longitudinal axis, and first and second side edges, the pattern length and the side edges, in combination, defining a third area of the bond pattern, the third area of the bond pattern being smaller than at least one of the first and second areas of the respective first and second flexible sheet materials such that a portion of at least one of the first and second areas of respective said first and second flexible sheet materials is outside the bond pattern, the

bond pattern having a bond pattern interior between the first and second side edges, and a pattern width between the first and second side edges,

the bond pattern reflecting application of force, during formation of the bond pattern, urging the first and second flexible sheet materials toward each other in face-to-face relationship to form an array of separate, distinct, and spaced elongate bond elements in a repeating arrangement affixing said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other, ones of said bond elements extending across the width of said bond pattern, from loci proximate the side edges, at angles of between about 10 degrees and about 65 degrees with respect to the longitudinal axis,

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44. An absorbent article as in Claim 41, said bond pattern comprising

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- (i) a first sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate, distinct, and spaced stress receptor elements disposed along the length of the bond pattern, proximate the side edges of the bond pattern, and
 - (ii) a second sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate, distinct, and spaced transfer and dissipation elements disposed along the length of the bond pattern, inwardly of the side edges of the bond pattern and generally inwardly of the stress receptor elements, respective transfer

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and dissipation elements having spaced first and second ends, and legs extending from the respective ends toward each other and outwardly of the longitudinal axis along the length of the bond pattern to outwardly-disposed portions of said legs between said stress receptor elements.

48(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 41 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of thermal energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

49(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 41 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of ultrasonic-frequency energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

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50(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 41 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises a fibrous web having a multiplicity of randomly-spaced small openings extending from one of the respective major surfaces into the interior of the respective web.

51(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 41 wherein said first flexible sheet material comprises an outer cover, wherein said second flexible sheet material comprises a body side liner, and wherein at least one of said outer cover and said body side liner comprises polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, and polyamides, and mixtures, copolymers, and blends of said polymeric materials.

52(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 41 wherein said second flexible sheet material comprises a body side liner and wherein said body side liner comprises

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material selected from the group consisting of porous foams, reticulated foams, apertured polymeric films, polymeric fibers, and natural fibers.

62(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 41 wherein increases and decreases in power distribution across the width of the bond pattern, as the bond pattern is being formed, can be defined by variations in composite contact lengths as compared to the average composite contact length for a given bond pattern for at least a complete circumferential rotation of a rotary anvil, wherein variations in composite contact lengths of the bond pattern reflect no more than about 13% of the average composite contact length of the bond pattern throughout the complete circumferential anvil rotation.

63(Amended). An absorbent article having a front portion and a rear portion, and a crotch portion extending between said front portion and said rear portion, said absorbent article comprising:

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- (a) a first flexible sheet material having first and second opposing major surfaces, the first and second major surfaces defining a first overall area of said first flexible sheet material, and a first web interior between the first and second major surfaces;
 - (b) a second flexible sheet material having third and fourth opposing major surfaces, the third and fourth major surfaces defining a second overall area of said second flexible sheet material, and a second web interior between the first and second major surfaces;
 - (c) a multiplicity of bond elements defining bonds bonding said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other in a bond pattern, and

- (d) an absorbent core disposed adjacent at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials,

the bond pattern having a pattern length including a central longitudinal axis, and first and second side edges, the pattern length and the side edges, in combination, defining a third area of the bond pattern, the third area of the bond pattern being smaller than at least one of the first and second areas of the respective first and second flexible sheet materials such that a portion of at least one of the first and second areas of respective said first and second flexible sheet materials is outside the bond pattern, the bond pattern having a bond pattern interior between the first and second side edges, and a pattern width between the first and second side edges,

the bond pattern reflecting application of force, during formation of the bond pattern, urging the first and second flexible sheet materials toward each other in face-to-face relationship to form an array of separate, distinct, and spaced elongate bond elements in a repeating arrangement affixing said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other,

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- (e) as ones of said bond elements, a first sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate, distinct, and spaced stress receptor elements disposed along the length, and proximate the side edges of, the bond pattern, and
- (f) as ones of said bond elements, a second sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate, distinct, and spaced transfer and dissipation elements disposed along the length of the bond pattern, inwardly of the side edges of the bond pattern and generally inwardly of the stress receptor elements, respective said transfer and dissipation elements having spaced first and second ends, and legs extending from the respective first and second ends toward each other and outwardly of the longitudinal axis along the length of the bond pattern to outwardly-disposed portions of said legs between said stress receptor elements, the stress transfer and

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dissipation elements directing stresses inwardly into the interior of the bond pattern.

67(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 63 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of thermal energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

68(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 63 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of ultrasonic-frequency energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

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69(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 63 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, and polyamides, and copolymers, mixtures, and blends of said polymeric materials.

70(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 63 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises a fibrous web having a multiplicity of randomly-spaced small openings extending from one of the respective major surfaces into the interior of the respective web.

73(Amended). An absorbent article having a front portion and a rear portion, and a crotch portion extending between said front portion and said rear portion, said absorbent article comprising:

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- (a) a first flexible sheet material having first and second opposing major surfaces, the first and second major surfaces defining a first overall area

of said first flexible sheet material, and a first web interior between the first and second major surfaces;

- (b) a second flexible sheet material having third and fourth opposing major surfaces, the third and fourth major surfaces defining a second overall area of said second flexible sheet material, and a second web interior between the first and second major surfaces;
- (c) a multiplicity of bond elements defining bonds bonding said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other in a bond pattern, and
- (d) an absorbent core disposed adjacent at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials,

the bond pattern having a pattern length, and first and second side edges, the pattern length and the side edges, in combination, defining a third area of the bond pattern, the third area of the bond pattern being smaller than at least one of the first and second areas of the respective first and second flexible sheet materials such that a portion of at least one of the first and second areas of respective said first and second flexible sheet materials is outside the bond pattern, the bond pattern having a bond pattern interior between the first and second side edges, and a pattern width between the first and second side edges, and a central longitudinal axis,

the bond pattern reflecting application of force, during formation of the bond pattern, urging the first and second flexible sheet materials toward each other in face-to-face relationship to form an array of separate, distinct, and spaced elongate bond elements in a repeating arrangement affixing said first and second flexible sheet materials to each other,

- (e) as ones of said bond elements, a first sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate, distinct, and spaced stress receptor elements disposed along the length, and proximate the side edges of, the bond pattern, and

- (f) as ones of said bond elements, a second sub-array of longitudinally-oriented separate, distinct, and spaced transfer and dissipation elements spaced along the length of the bond pattern, inwardly of the side edges of the bond pattern and generally inwardly of the stress receptor elements, respective said transfer and dissipation elements having first ends disposed on the interior of the bond pattern, said respective transfer and dissipation elements extending to second ends adjacent the side edges of the bond pattern between respective ones of said stress receptor elements, the stress transfer and dissipation elements directing stresses inwardly into the interior of the bond pattern, and thereby assisting in dissipating such stresses on the interior of the bond pattern.

74(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 73 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of thermal energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

75(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 73 wherein bonds corresponding to said bond elements are activated by application of ultrasonic-frequency energy to at least one of said first and second flexible sheet materials.

76(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 73 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet materials comprises polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, and polyamides, and copolymers, mixtures, and blends of said polymeric materials.

77(Amended). An absorbent article as in Claim 73 wherein at least one of said first and said second flexible sheet material comprises a fibrous web having a

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multiplicity of randomly-spaced small openings extending from one of the respective major surfaces into the interior of the respective web.
